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## **For Immediate Release**

**DATE:** November 17, 2009

### **17 MEMBERS OR ASSOCIATES OF THE ATHENS PARK BLOODS STREET GANG CHARGED WITH FEDERAL AND STATE NARCOTICS VIOLATIONS IN FINAL PHASE OF "OPERATION BLOOD KLOT"**

Hundreds of Sheriff's deputies and FBI agents executed arrest and search warrants this morning in the final phase of a coordinated operation in which members of a violent street gang were taken into custody for their alleged roles in the distribution of narcotics and illegal possession of firearms in South Los Angeles. The results of today's operation were announced by George S. Cardona, Acting United States Attorney in Los Angeles; Leroy Baca, Sheriff of Los Angeles County, and Keith Bolcar, Acting Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI in Los Angeles. The announcement of the operation, called "Operation Blood Klot," was made on behalf of multiple agencies that participated in the investigation, including officers with the Los Angeles County Probation Department, a member of the task force.

Today's operation represents the final phase of the joint investigation. Seventeen members or associates of the Athens Park Bloods (APBs), to include members of the 127th Street clique, were charged in a federal indictment and criminal complaint, and eight state warrants, for their alleged roles in a narcotics trafficking conspiracy that operated within a South Los Angeles neighborhood. The federal indictments that were unsealed this morning charge nine gang members with crimes that include possession of cocaine base (crack) with intent to distribute, and conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine base, and firearms violations, including felon in possession of a firearm. The remaining eight defendants are named in state charges filed in Los Angeles Superior Court for their roles in the illegal drug distribution operation and/or conspiracy.

Many of the defendants at the federal and state level were arrested this morning; however some of the defendants are still being sought by law enforcement.

The FBI and the Sheriff's Department initiated an investigation to address gang-related crime and violent crime related to narcotics trafficking being reported in an area of South Los Angeles, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Century Station. Using statistics, including offenses reported to the police, and further analysis, the task force identified the Athens Park Bloods territory as among the most violent in the city, and focused on the senior members who control the criminal activity in the area. The APBs have established ties to other gangs in the area, and are known to have ongoing violent disputes with several local gangs to include various cliques of their rival Crips.

The APBs are organized by several loosely affiliated cliques; one of the most violent being the 127th Street clique, which controls that neighborhood and is known to be involved in a variety of crimes; including murders, assaults, robberies, narcotics and firearms violations. The APBs do not have one leader or "shotcaller," but instead, rely on several senior members of the gang who work independently to regulate the illegal activity of the gang and their respective cliques. This investigation targeted the senior APB gang members with an emphasis on those associated with the violent 127th Street clique.

Prior to the charges announced today, this investigation resulted in 20 arrests of Athens Park Bloods members or associates, separate from those individuals sought today. Among those arrested were active parolees and felony probationers. In addition to substantial quantities of narcotics, task force members seized several handguns and rifles during this investigation. During today's operation, four federal search warrants were executed, resulting in the seizure of narcotics; including crack cocaine, marijuana and drug paraphernalia, as well as multiple weapons and cash, believed to be illicit proceeds from drug sales. Simultaneous parole and probation searches were also conducted this morning, resulting in additional arrests.

Based on federal sentencing laws, the penalties for the defendants vary. The majority of the federal defendants face mandatory-minimum prison terms ranging from five to ten years and, in some cases, longer, depending on their criminal history; and maximum penalties ranging from ten years to life imprisonment. Federal defendants arrested today will make an initial appearance in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles this afternoon.

This case was investigated by agents with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, detectives with the Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department and Los Angeles County Probation Department. Multiple agencies participated in today's operation, including the Long Beach Police Department, the Los Angeles Police Department, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Los Angeles County Department of Child and Family Services, and agents with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

The federal defendants will be prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office in Los Angeles. The District Attorney in Los Angeles will prosecute defendants charged by the state.

The FBI/LASD Task Force is one of many FBI Safe Streets Task Forces throughout the United States, funded for the purpose of assisting local police in identifying and addressing violent crime in America.

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